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Territorial

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: January 5, 1960

SUBJECT: Shatt-el-Arab Dispute

GG/N CIA

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Willie Morris, First Secretary, British Embassy
Mr. Grant E. Mouser, Officer in Charge, Iranian Affairs, GTI

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Mr. Morris asked when the Department's comment on the suggested U.K. approach to Iran would be available. The Foreign Office believed that it must reply as promptly as possible to the Iranian request for British support of its claim to the thalweg as the boundary in the Shatt-el-Arab. Mr. Morris asked if something in the nature of an interim reply could be given to the Foreign Office pending receipt of the Department's detailed comment.

Mr. Mouser replied that the Department agreed generally with the British approach but would have some comment on specific points. For example, the Department felt that the order of the paragraphs in the written portion of the U.K. approach might well be reversed in order to put the emphasis upon British desire to see a peaceful resolution of the dispute rather than upon the freedom of navigation aspect. Mr. Morris commented that the Department's general agreement with the suggested approach was all that he needed at the moment. On Mr. Mouser's specific comment, he said that since British shipping constituted almost fifty percent of the traffic on the Shatt, the Foreign Office might wish to retain the present emphasis in the written portion of its reply to the Iranians.

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